

Milt and his comrades knew the dangers they faced. After flying a mission at night, he would later recall that ground fire is frightening during the day, "but to see it at night at a low altitude, you think every shot coming up has your name on it."

Yet despite the dangers, he fought without fear.

After World War II, Milt continued to serve in the U.S. Air Force Reserve, rising to the rank of lieutenant colonel and retiring with 20 years of honorable service in 1962.

Even when his active duty service had ended, he continued to serve our country through his work with several firms providing weapons systems and equipment to the Department of Defense. This association continued until his civilian retirement in 1989 at the age of 72.

The measure of a man's life is not solely in what he did, but in what he did for others. Throughout his life, Milton Sanders constantly sacrificed his time and talents in service to others in his church, his community, and his Nation. Every person who came into contact with him knew he was a friend they could always count on, no matter the hour, no matter the need.

Perhaps Milt's greatest contribution to our Nation comes from the legacy of his 46 years of loving marriage to his wife Jean. They have eight children, including two graduates of our military service academies; 28 grandchildren; and 17 great-grandchildren.

I will always treasure the memories of my monthly home teaching visits to the Sanders home. His piano playing, story-telling and beautiful prayers will always be vividly present in my mind. Jean, I learned during these visits, has always been the foundation of their wonderful relationship.

Like so many other members of his generation, Milton Sanders was a great yet humble patriot. Because of the sacrifices they made, our lives are immeasurably better than they otherwise might have been. Our Nation owes them more than words can ever convey.

HOMAGE TO BILL AND TERI POPP

Mr. COLEMAN. Mr. President, today I pay homage to Minnesotans who are helping the Minnesota National Guard and their families. The National Guard serves our country and the States as a unique organization among all branches of the United States Armed Forces. The Guard is America's community-based defense force, located in more than 2,700 cities and towns across the Nation. Sixty-two of those cities are located in Minnesota. National Guard members are citizen-soldiers and airmen who are integral members of their communities. Minnesota National Guard members live, shop, work, worship, and go to school in Minnesota's cities and towns. This inexorable link between the community and its citizen-soldiers is what makes

the National Guard an important and necessary part of their local and national communities.

The Minnesota Army and Air National Guard are reserve components of the United States Army and Air Force. During times of national emergency, National Guard members may be called into active Federal service by the President of the United States. Guard members from Minnesota have served in every major conflict involving the United States Armed Forces since the Guard's inception more than 360 years ago. At this time, Minnesota National Guard members are serving in Iraq, Bosnia, Afghanistan, and Kosovo, as well as in other countries and within the State of Minnesota.

For the past 40 years, National Guard members have primarily served within their own communities, helping assist local law enforcement agencies during emergencies. In this capacity, members worked for the Guard on a part-time basis, usually just during emergency situations. Guard members earned the majority of their income from their jobs in the community. In the past couple of years, Guard members have been called to active duty. Because of this, they no longer earn their civilian incomes. For the most part, their civilian pay far exceeds their pay on active duty. In addition, when Guard members are deployed, they and their families need to support two households—the Guard member in their remote location and the family the Guard member leaves behind. While employers are encouraged to meet the pay differential for the Guard, oftentimes small companies cannot meet this obligation. Many Guard members and their families are caught in an unanticipated set of circumstances due to long terms of deployment overseas while supporting and protecting our country.

Inspired by the National Guard's members' dedication, patriotism, and selflessness, many Minnesotans have stepped forward to help Minnesota National Guard soldiers and their families. The efforts of Bill and Teri Popp, of Minnetonka, MN, deserve special praise. Long-time supporters of the Guard, they gave generously and challenged other Minnesotans to join them in supporting the Minnesota National Guard. Bill, founder and owner of POPP Telecom, believes that his company can and should improve the quality of life for everyone in his community. To that end, the Pops donated \$1,000 to every Minnesota National Guard member who was serving in Iraq, as of November 14, 2003. The gift the Pops made to Guard members in Iraq totaled \$166,000.

A true patriot, Bill included a thank you letter to each Guard member that received the donation that provided: "Thank you for putting your life on hold, and on the line, in service to our country. Thank you for . . . risking your life to advance liberty and justice for all people of the world."

To then set an example to the community, the Pops made an additional

donation to the Minnesota National Guard Foundation to help Guard members in financial need. Bill, through his company, also prepared and ran announcements on Minnesota radio stations encouraging other people and companies in Minnesota to make donations to the foundation to support members of the Minnesota National Guard and military reserves who have been impacted economically by extended periods of active duty service.

The Pops not only have promised to make sure the sacrifices the Guard and other military personnel make in service to our country will not be forgotten, they have followed through to help that promise come true. They epitomize the strength and patriotism of our great Nation.

On behalf of all Minnesotans, I express my heartfelt appreciation to Bill and Teri Popp for their generosity and patriotism. They deserve all our thanks.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

SERGEANT BENJAMIN GILMAN

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I rise today to speak in tribute to U.S. Army Sgt. Benjamin Gilman, of Meriden, Connecticut, who died in Afghanistan on January 29, 2004, at the age of 28.

Sergeant Gilman was killed along with seven other American soldiers in a weapons cache explosion near the town of Ghazni. He was part of the 41st Engineer Battalion, 10th Mountain Division, based in Fort Drum, NY.

Benjamin Gilman was always doing his best to help others, long before he enlisted in our Armed Forces. As a teenager, he won an award for his volunteer work at the Veterans Memorial Medical Center. When visiting his mother at her job at the Curtis Home for the elderly, he would spend time with the senior citizens who lived there, sharing conversations over games of checkers. While working at a fast food restaurant at the local mall, Benjamin made friends with a group of elderly women he would come to call his "adopted grandmothers."

While he was committed to service of all kinds, it was always Benjamin Gilman's dream to serve his country in the military. Even as a 7-year-old playing with action figures, young Benjamin told anyone who would listen that he would be a soldier someday.

Benjamin was a special person for many people, and there were many people who were special to him. One of those people was Jean Moran. When Benjamin was 11 years old, he met Jean through a local Big Brother/Big Sister program. It was the first time that the program's organizers had assigned a big sister to a boy. But Jean became a fixture in Benjamin's life for years to come, taking on the role of the older sibling that he never had.

Of all the bonds and friendships Benjamin had, though, none was more lasting or special than his relationship with his mother, Edie Gilman. A single